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MEETING POVERTY — FACE À LA PAUVRETÉ

Development Planning as a Setting for Community Development

William A. Dyson

MP - 31

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AS A SETTING
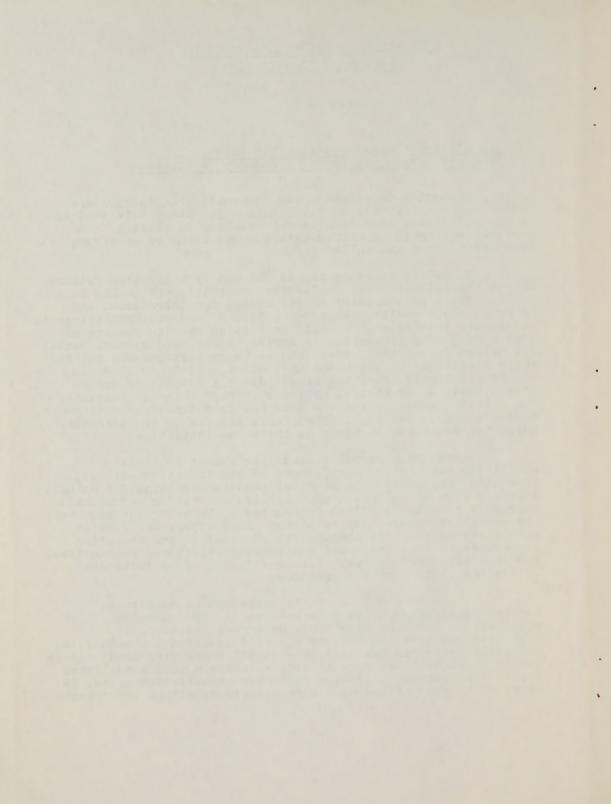## FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

William A. Dyson

1. The Distinction and Relationship Between Community Organization and Community Development

Community development and community organization are both components of developmental planning. Since this seminar is grappling with both terms and is seeking to clarify professional training appropriate to both forms of endeavor, some definitions are called for.

Community development, as defined by the United Nations and at the International Conference on Social Work in Rio de Janeiro, is a social interventive method for introducing and bringing about social, economic, political and cultural change in particular localities. Not all localities require the use of such a form of intervention to further their development. Rather the method is currently perceived as being particularly apt for those localities in which the indigenous social structure is either relatively primitive or rigid. The localities may be urban, rural or primitive, or parts thereof. In all instances the existing social structure does not lend itself to autonomous, viable change. The local inhabitants are unable to undertake, adapt to, or maintain change on their own initiative.

Where the external demands for change in certain localities require the development of new social structures, community development, in light of present knowledge and values, offers a form of intervention which is less random and which carries a greater potential for success. Moreover the required new social structures may be either added super-structure in primitively structured communities or parallel and co-opting structures in more developed but rigidly structured communities. The primitive communities, of course, may in some instances be little more than social aggregates.

This approach to community development permits a clearer distinction to be made between it and community organization than has heretofore occurred. Accordingly, community organization is also a social interventive method, as currently perceived and used, most apt for bringing about viable change in communities with already relatively well established social structures. Hence the community organization method is oriented to communities with a relatively developed and dynamic

institutional life. It relies more heavily, than does the community development method, on the more explicit and sophisticated techniques of planning and co-ordination.

But, despite these distinctions, community-oriented practitioners in both these domains, in my view, share the same attitudes (value orientations and responses), knowledge and techniques used differentially. Workers in both settings can be identified as variations of the same professional mould. In the one case (community development), the practitioner works toward the introduction and articulation of new knowledge, attitudes and skills leading to the creation of new values, new rôles and new, though perhaps primitive, rôle networks. In the latter case (community organization), the practitioner works toward the modification and/or expansion of knowledge, attitudes and skills and the modification, expansion and articulation of more complex rôles and rôle networks.

2. The Relationship between Community
   Development and Developmental Planning

All planning is oriented to change and development; otherwise the term planning is meaningless. The only purpose served by the redundancy of the term 'development planning' is that it serves to make more explicit the developmental, that is, the growth concept inherent in planning. Development is growth and growth involves change, and therefore the very processes leading to change raise, among other things, many human difficulties such as impatience and rashness, resistance and conflict. The gamut of human reactions in varying degrees are found sooner or later, and perhaps continuously, in development situations, and as such they must be firstly acknowledged and secondly acted upon as relevant variables in the change process. And these human reactions and attitudes orient the social and political (whether big "P" or little "p") process of the communities in question. It is at this point that community development has relevance to developmental planning.

Thus, we are led far beyond a concept of planning (and co-ordination) so characteristic of much planning in today's world, which presupposes a neutral human mass. Rather the concept "developmental planning" directs us explicitly to the problems of implementation, i.e., putting actual change in motion, from the start. Without describing them further, this

naturally leads to the whole range of professional considerations around the necessity of involving the participants in change situations in the developmental process, whether they be indigenous in more primitive settings, or whether organizational and institutional in more complex settings.

But this has implications for community development under social work auspices. Social interactions of a group or community nature are the stuff of community development and community organization practice. This method has specific relevance whenever human change processes are under consideration whether the substantive content of the change be in the economic, social, educational, health, or leisure sectors, - for that matter any sector of institutional or pre-institutional living. This thesis I first stated at the Annual Meeting of the Council of Social Education in 1961.[1] My further studies and experience have only confirmed this for me. Thus views which see community organization and community development practice as limited to facilitating change in the social sector, or even more narrowly in the field of social welfare, confuse the locus of historical origin (i.e., our need as social workers in earlier days to organize and develop our institutional life) with the locus of valid practice (i.e., group, community, and institutional inter-action). To have said this detracts in no way from the contribution of social work to this field of practice. Our contribution has been heavy and can continue to be, should we wish to recognize the broad scope of practice before us. On the other hand, if our vision is myopic, our contribution will only diminish.

The next factor I wish to stress is the dependence of all communities, including and perhaps especially the under-developed, on external resources.

Some glibly talk of community development as something that can be home grown and homespun. They do so because this has happened in the past. They say, Canada, as many modern nations, has grown without the help of a recognized corps of

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[1] Dyson, William A. "Community Organization". Community Development, Community Organization, Community Planning. New York. National Association of Social Workers, 1961.

professional community development workers. Why not now too?
This line of thought falls short today for three reasons.
Firstly, because of our current values we have decided we
don't want to wait for decades and centuries for some areas to
develop on their own. Secondly, we now know that some communities,
like some people, have radical deficiencies of one or more kinds;
without intervention, they will never develop. Thirdly, our
perception of fundamental needs has changed. No longer are food,
shelter and clothing seen as the sole basic necessities.
Education, physical and mental health, technical skills, to name
a few, are now seen as fundamental too. And needs such as these
require massive inputs of technical and material resources,
resources which communities must both exploit internally and
receive from the outside. The impact and articulations of external
vertical relationships on modern local communities, which are
particularly important in this interdependence of all our
communities at their various levels, has been well set forth by
Rolland Warren[2] and I need add little here.

This means that community development programs which
are solely satisfied with assisting local people to become
aware of and ready for action on their needs and problems,
without adequate external resource backstopping, can do such
communities a disservice, and perhaps even further damage it.
It is as if they place the community nose-to-pane against the
pastry shop but withold the means to buy. Let us be clear,
community development is serious business, and has no room
for naiveté. We cannot ethically recognize only a piece of the
package - we must accept it all.

This has two implications: the readiness of the
community development worker to apply his competence in what-
ever institutional sphere that requires it; and a recognition
that the organization of the external resources, for tapping
as required, does not happen on its own.

Regarding the first implication, community development
workers have to be prepared to work with any and all resources.

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[2]
Rolland W. Warren. Community in America.
Chicago Rand McNally, 1963.

The theoretical basis for this statement, and no theory is valid unless it is practical, is that community life is a matrix of many social sub-systems, whether developed or primitive. All of these sub-systems are interdependent and cannot be tampered with in a piecemeal fashion. Moreover, the introduction of effective development requires that the worker be ready to enter at whatever point of entry and leverage the social structure permits. Also the build-up of the developmental processes will require work eventually to go forward in a number of institutional sectors simultaneously, although within these several sectors priorities and inputs may vary at any given moment.

Regarding the second implication, the external resources must be readied and deployed for use when and where they are required. It is at this point that developmental planning becomes relevant to community development.

External technical and material resources are located today in organizations which are either autonomous or quasi-autonomous. Examples are all kinds of government departments and agencies, private business corporations, universities, and private agencies and associations. Most if not all are jealous of what they perceive as their jurisdictions. Further complicating this situation, many are large-scale organizations, all accustomed to vertical administration. Few are accustomed to the demands for interdependence and interaction that a developmental framework places upon them. Yet effective development planning, oriented to the implementation of local change, requires planned and co-ordinated inter-agency forms of administration. In other words, technical and/or material resources introduced into a locality at random (random from the point of view of the matrix, though not seen as random by the specific agency introducing its resource on its own without reference to others) lead frequently to increased local resistance, frustration and damage at worst or badly skewed development at best.

It is in this cauldron of indifferent, competing or hostile resource agencies (public, quasi-public, and private) that developmental planning has to take place. The relevance of community organization practice as defined earlier becomes clearer at this point. It has much to offer the planning and co-ordinating processes.

Thus there are two facets that developmental planning in its orientations to undeveloped or under-developed

communities must take into account:

    (1) The programming of external resources; and

    (2) Their articulation with actual or potential local
        resources through the community development program
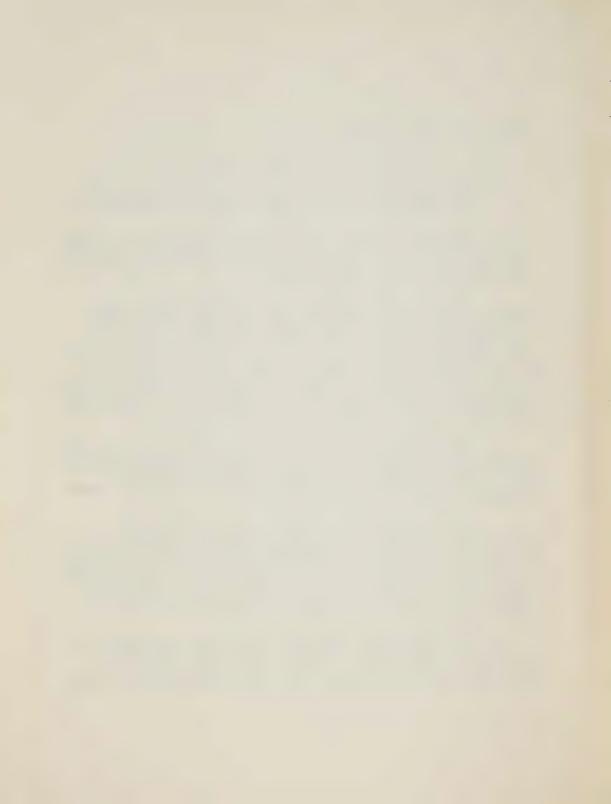   (the team of field workers).

       Nor do the tasks of developmental planning stop here.
Also involved are research programs of many kinds to identify,
correlate and project the characteristics of local and area
resources, both human and material.

       Moreover as a part of its programming tasks, once
specific developmental problems and needs are identified,
technical and material resource programs in all likelihood
will have to be modified, further articulated, and even new
ones created and co-ordinated into the resource matrix. The
accomplishment of these changes within the resource matrix,
in addition to technical skills and competence, likewise calls
for community organization skills and competence. Agency and
departmental directors and agency boards do not always easily
undertake to eliminate, modify or create programs.

       And lastly, developmental planning must also take into
account the personnel needs of both its community development
and the various resource programs. Plans and programs,
without adequate staff, both administrative and field, remain
but plans - pie in the sky.

       In Canada, at the federal level, developmental
planning is in its initial stages. On all the points noted
in this paper, work is in progress. The relationship between
developmental planning and community development is also being
built. The distance to go is yet far, but in the papers which
follow mine, you will catch a concrete glimpse of the great
advances that have already been made and of those that are
getting underway.

       Deliberately, I have not entered upon a discussion of
the federal, provincial and local rôles in developmental
planning. I might only say that in general my theoretical
remarks apply to all levels. The inter-relationships of these

levels, at all of which some developmental planning is now occurring in Canada, are complex and would require a separate paper. In any event, it would exceed the focus on federal programs that you have chosen to explore this year. Once you have explored the provincial scene, as I gather you hope to do next year, such a paper may be more appropriate.

Before closing, I wish only to note the rôle of the Special Planning Secretariat of the Privy Council Office. The federal government has placed upon it, under the direction of a special committee of the Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, responsibility for planning and co-ordinating the federal effort to reduce poverty and expand opportunity.

With regard to community development programs, which are of particular interest to you, the Secretariat therefore is the focus point for an inter-related series of inter-departmental committees exploring and working on such problems and issues as: the supply of trained community development personnel in Canada both for federal and other programs; the methods of operational programming; the relationships of governmental and private organizations in community development; community development research and information exchange; and the special developmental problems of Indians, Eskimos and Métis.

In closing, may I wish you well in your deliberations. Community development is becoming a matter of growing importance in Canada as we seek to bring all Canadians into the mainstream of our national life. Without doubt, the future ability of our poor to rise and contribute to and benefit from our national growth and strength rests in part in your hands.

(Note: This paper was prepared for presentation to
        the Second Institute of the National Committee
        of Canadian Schools of Social Work, November
        25-28, 1965, Toronto, Ontario)